

STATE SENATOR • MARK SCHAUER • 19TH DISTRICT

Schauer Press Release



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Schauer Participates in Midwest Passenger Rail Meeting

LANSING—State Sen. Mark Schauer met this morning with members of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission. They discussed Michigan's role in interstate rail travel and the state's need to enter the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact.

"Rail transportation deserves strong support from all levels of government," said Schauer. In a time of increasing energy concerns and growing road congestion, citizens deserve the efficient, affordable options that rail travel provides."

Rail usage is increasing. According to the Michigan Department of Transportation's Bureau of Multimodal Transportation Services, ridership has increased on Michigan's rail lines significantly over the past two years.

As a result of Thursday's meeting, Sen. Schauer has endorsed the effort to have Michigan join the Compact.

"Rail travel is an important piece of long-range transportation planning," explained Schauer. "Michigan needs to join the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact in order to have a voice in the regional and national planning process."

The main purpose of the Compact is to promote, coordinate, and support regional improvements to passenger rail service.

Rail travel is faster and safer than auto travel. It is more affordable than air travel, and in many cases, faster from door-to-door. Providing air travel to smaller cities is generally impossible because of the costs associated. Rail travel allows for increased travel between smaller cities and larger metropolitan areas. Additionally, passenger trains use much less energy and cause less air pollution per passenger than do either automobiles or airplanes. Americans could save \$60 billion per year in time and fuel by increasing rail usage.

“Funding for rail travel is the type of smart spending our economy needs, and I have worked hard to influence our transportation budget to reflect that,” said Schauer.

For every dollar invested in rail travel, there is a return of \$1.70, according to an economic analysis study by the Midwest Regional Rail System. Sen. Schauer continued his advocacy for state Amtrak funding in an effort to increase ridership and create jobs during the budget process this fall.

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Mark Schauer is the Senate Democratic Floor Leader. He represents the 19th Senate District, which includes all of Calhoun County and most of Jackson County.